

THYMOCYTE CASPASE ACTIVITY AND NEGATIVE SELECTION

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

Work described herein shows that T cell receptor triggering by peptide/MHC ligands activates a caspase in
5 thymocytes, including CD4+CD8+ double positive thymocytes, resulting in their death. Methods of inhibiting apoptosis in thymocytes are described, as well as assays for identifying an agent which alters the activity of the caspase are described.